

# STITCHING BOOK CLUB



November 2023

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## What's In the Hoop?

There's a new design and hand-dyed fabric in the shop!

“Autumn Lace” is my latest pattern release. While the design itself has a lot of detail, it is the fabric that is the true star of this show. The fabric is called “Autumn Harvest”, and this was a tricky one to get right. It took multiple attempts at dyeing to get the muted, dusty tone of orange that I was going for. I'm very happy with the result and it ended up being the perfect base for this lace design.

Please continue reading the newsletter for more info!

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## A MESSAGE FROM YOUR HOST

November...the month between seasons. I will not lie and say that I was overly sad to be leaving Montana at the end of October. As soon as the cold weather set in, I remembered why I retreated to the South all those years ago. As much as I love the beauty of a fresh snow clinging to the tree branches and coating the mountain tops, the temperature is something that I can definitely live without, especially after spending last winter buried in snow at the Grand Canyon.

On my journey back South, I made a point of stopping at Zion National Park, a place that I have come to dearly love. I don't think I have ever had a bad stay at Zion, and this was no exception. Each of my visits has been blessed by perfect weather and this year I was lucky enough to see it at the peak of its autumn foliage. To say it was breathtaking is an understatement. I spent two days leisurely traversing the dry riverbeds in the quieter regions of the park and it was like stepping into my own private fairytale. I thought of you all often and how lovely it would be to gather and stitch in such a beautiful place. If I could have stayed there forever, perhaps I would have. But life continues on, and I begrudgingly continued my trek south until I arrived back home in Las Vegas.



*Autumn colors at Zion National Park.*

With the completion of the Anne of Green Gables SAL, I know many of you are chomping at the bit to know what comes next. I have been working on our next SAL design, and I get more excited about it each time I open the file. However, it is going to be some time before it is ready for you all. This is largely due to the fact that I have been working very hard on something else. This project is something that I have wanted for a very long time, and I am thrilled to see it coming into fruition. I'm not quite ready to give you all the details right now, but I will be sending out a special edition of the newsletter in a few weeks with the big reveal.

In the meantime, I hope that you will enjoy my latest design. "Autumn Lace" was such a peaceful piece to design and stitch. You may have seen my Flosstube video of this piece being worked on at the riverside. That was a pleasant afternoon, indeed! The freebie for this month is "A Time to Give Thanks". With Thanksgiving just around the corner, I wanted to do another seasonal piece without being too specific to the American holiday so that all our international friends can also enjoy the design. I know I've said this before, but I just love stitching autumn colors! I hope you all have a lovely month and have lots to be thankful for this season!

Happy stitching! Love, Kristin Ashley

When I set out to create a new fabric color, I knew that I wanted it to be a dusty orange. Little did I know that what I was actually looking for was “golden brown”.

While this floss is not an exact match to the Autumn Harvest fabric, it is pretty darn close to the Aida.

It is such a lovely shade and now that it is on my radar, I look forward to using it in patterns in the future.

## Color of the Month

### “Golden Brown-medium”

DMC 976



## WHAT I'M READING

Okay, I've jumped on the ACOTAR train. If you are anything like me, I had no idea what ACOTAR was but kept seeing the acronym everywhere. So, I finally looked it up and learned that it stands for Sarah J. Maas's book series, *A Court of Thorns and Roses*.

I love a good fantasy romance novel, so I decided to dig in and give it a try. I have only read the first book and am just dipping into the second. There are five books in the series, so I'm hesitant to give an opinion just yet. Though, there are a few thoughts that I have thus far.

First of all, I do enjoy Maas's writing style. I am actually an incredibly picky reader and if I can't get into a book's flow easily, I am going to jump ship quickly. So, I can certainly give her praise for that. I did struggle a bit with the second half of the novel, however. Some of the plotlines and character developments just rubbed me the wrong way. I think they were simply too predictable while being wildly unrealistic at the same time. There also wasn't enough relationship building between the two leads before they fell in love, in my opinion, and that's usually my favorite part.

But, despite all that, there's still a lot of book to digest before coming to a conclusion. It can't be one of the most popular current book series for no reason, right? So, I will be continuing on and hoping to find what I've been missing.



## HOOPS, Q-SNAPS, AND SCROLL FRAMES

Depending on the project being worked, a frame can be one of the most important tools in a needleworker's arsenal. While I am primarily an in-hand stitcher, the value of a frame in certain situations cannot be underestimated. Let's take a look at different kinds of frames and what the advantages and disadvantages are of each.

There are three primary types of embroidery frames: hoops, q-snaps, and scroll frames. Each of these frames has their own set of advantages and disadvantages, but they all perform the same service of keeping your fabric taut, which can have a surprising effect on your stitches. I personally love stitching in-hand. I like how easy it is to just pick a seat, grab my fabric and go to work. There's no set up necessary or adjustments needed. It allows for easy manipulation of the fabric when finishing off a thread or trying to get a knot out. It's just stitching in its simplest form which has its own sort of pleasure. I will not, however, discount the value of a frame and how it can benefit your stitching, and there are certain situations that will have me grabbing for a frame every time.

While I will always stitch small pieces in-hand, when a piece of fabric reaches a certain size (anything bigger than about 12 inches in either direction) it is time to put it in a frame. It goes without saying that the bigger your fabric, the harder it is to stitch in hand. As you work throughout the surface, the outlying fabric gets floppy and hangs in a way that makes working your needle on the backside challenging. It also gets heavy and the weight pulling your fabric in weird directions can have a negative effect on the quality of your stitches. It also puts tremendous strain on your hands. However, working in a frame that is held on a stand—the only way I use a frame—allows you to stitch a lot longer because the strain on your hands is minimized, meaning stitching for hours is not a problem. Unfortunately, if you do not have a stand available, using a frame will actually increase the strain on your hands.

It's also easier to analyze your working area and see any mistakes you've made while working in a frame, which is why it's nice to stitch complex pieces in a frame, too. Also, keeping your fabric taut in a frame is going to give you much plumper stitches. So, if there is a piece that I know I want to be particularly well done, such as an heirloom piece, I will stitch it in a frame. But not all frames are the same. There are definitely some advantages and disadvantages to each kind. So, let's take a look at them individually.

**Hoops:** Perhaps the most recognizable of all embroidery frames, hoops have stood the test of time as a needleworkers' loyal companion. There is something so quintessential about the image of a needleworker holding a hoop. They are also very easy to acquire, as just about every craft store carries them. Even Walmart has hoop frames! They are also pleasantly affordable and come in such a variety of shapes (oval and round) and sizes that it's easy to find just what you're looking for. For these reasons, hoops are great for beginners that don't want a large investment.

I, however, have some serious issues with hoops which is why I rarely use them. Perhaps the most prevalent reason why I don't utilize hoops is that I have a really difficult time holding them. As mentioned briefly above, holding a hoop in-hand puts tremendous strain on your hand, even more so than holding just the fabric. Even though hoops are the lightest type of frame, after only a few minutes of stitching, trying to keep the frame held up while also keeping the excess fabric cascading around it in check, my hand is aching. Now, of course, there are stands that hoops can be attached to, but there are other attributes of these frames that keep me from using them, also.



*Stitching Book Club logo finished in a hoop frame.*

After putting in hours of hard work on a piece, we all want it to be shown in the best way possible. This means having the fabric crisply pressed and all the stitches looking plump and fresh. Unfortunately, hoops have a horrible knack for leaving very hard to remove rings in the fabric, particularly on Aida fabric. There really is no way around this occurrence either. On top of that, not only do you get the rings, but you get plenty of other wrinkles from bunching the excess fabric up while you work around it. Now, this wouldn't really be a big deal, but if these hoop rings get set too deeply in the fabric, they can become almost impossible to remove. Even washed pieces can still show signs of rings depending on the fabric used.

One thing you can do to help prevent hoop rings from setting, is removing the hoop when not actively in use. This, of course, creates the nuisance of having to place the hoop every time you go to work, but it does help prevent the rings from becoming permanent.

Hoops also have the ability to flatten or distort your stitches. If you are placing your hoop over an area that has already been stitched, it only makes sense that those stitches are going to be pressed and pulled on while the hoop is fastened and as you stitch. Because hoops are not the best at keeping your fabric in place, it's common to have to tug on your outlying fabric to retighten your working space. This means even more strain on the stitches that are under the hoop's band. Placing a strip of thin cotton fabric between your hoop and stitching fabric may help, but the stitches are still going to experience some flattening from being pressed.

Finally, I also find hoop frustrating because of how often they must be moved. I will admit it...I get annoyed by things easily, and one thing that annoys me endlessly is having to get fabric into any sort of frame. It's always a bit of a fight to get it just right and with hoop frames, the only way to move on to another section of fabric is to remove the frame and refit it on the new area. This is something that I simply cannot abide by. Call me dramatic, but I simply hate having my stitching interrupted in such a way especially if you are in a good flow.

Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not totally discounting the use of hoops as stitching frames. There are certainly some good qualities about them. For one, they are great for working on small pieces. As the other types of frames are larger, hoops are the one source of frame that comes in very small sizes. If stitching miniature pieces, I have no problem using a hoop. And if the design fits entirely in the interior of the hoop, there is no worry about your stitches getting damaged. Also, I can easily praise hoops for their ability to be used as a finishing frame. Needlework finished into a hoop always looks so lovely and it's such an easy and affordable way to display your work. And, if you only stitch with frames, hoops are going to be the easiest to travel with as they can fit easily into most project bags and are lightweight.

While I am not a fan of hoop frames, I can certainly understand their appeal and I hope no one who uses them feels turned off by the above opinions. As with most things, it all comes down to personal preference and I am a firm believer in "to each their own".

**Advantages:** affordable, readily available, lightweight compared to other frames, easy to travel with, can be used as finishing frame

**Disadvantages:** leaves hard to remove rings in fabric, must be moved on fabric more often, can flatten previously worked stitches, not as good at keeping fabric taut, smaller working space

**Scroll Frames: I LOVE SCROLL FRAMES!** Okay, perhaps this is why I am so biased against hoop frames, because I am a very loyal scroll frame user. I was first interested in scroll frames after becoming frustrated using hoop frames. They were a solution to almost all my vexations.

First, what is a scroll frame? It consists of two dowels that have been split down the center and inserted into two spreader bars that tighten against the dowels to hold them in place. The fabric is inserted into the split dowels and then rolled around them like scrolls of paper until the center area is tight for stitching. Some scroll frames do not use split dowels, but rather have dowels that have paper attached to them that will then be sewn to the edge of your fabric as a way of securing the fabric for scrolling.

I was instantly drawn to scroll frames once I learned about them because I love that all of the fabric is secured within scroll frames so there is no excess fabric hanging around that must be dealt with while stitching. This means there is no handling of the actual fabric and that helps to keep your fabric looking fresh, clean, and wrinkle free. A

light pressing with an iron to take the curl out of the fabric is all that is necessary in most cases after a piece has been completed in a scroll frame.

But the best part about scroll frames is how easy they are to adjust the fabric as you progress in your stitching. Once you have completed an area of stitching, all you have to do is loosen the wingnuts on the spreader bars and scroll the dowels in whatever direction you need the fabric to move, then retighten the wingnuts and voila!—your fabric is ready to start stitching again! It is so incredibly simple and there is no readjustment of the fabric necessary. This also means that your stitches are getting less wear and tear from your frame. While having them rolled onto the bars



*“Autumn Lace” being worked in a scroll frame.*

can cause a little bit of flattening, it is nowhere near as bad as with hoops and q-snaps. Make sure to scroll your fabric inward so that the back of your fabric is always on the outside of the dowel and your stitches will be relatively safe.

Simply put, they solve all of the problems that I had with hoop frames. But I am not unable to acknowledge the disadvantages that scroll frames present, too.

The biggest disadvantage to scroll frames is that they are large and heavy. If holding a hoop puts too much strain on your hand, be prepared for some serious pain. In fact, I think it is almost impossible to hold a scroll frame in-hand, making a stand of some sort necessary. So, while I don't like hoops for the strain they put on my hands, at least it can be done in a pinch. With scroll frames, it's simply not an option.

While placing a scroll frame on a stand completely solves this obstacle, it can be a problem itself because floor frames can be quite expensive and scroll frames are already a bigger investment than hoops. It can also be hard to find a stand that works for your exact needs. Based on your stitching setup, you may not have room for a large front or side floor stand. At the same time, a lap stand that sits under your legs for support can be uncomfortable, may not sit in your chair properly, and doesn't raise the frame up as high as some may prefer it. I use the short legs that came with my current scroll frame while I stitch in bed, but it can be a bit of a pain to get in a comfortable stitching position with it. All of this clearly makes scroll frames very impractical for traveling and unless you are able to come up with a stand solution that works for you, they are very nearly impossible to use due to their inability to be held in-hand.

Another disadvantage is that it can be quite difficult to get the fabric on the frame initially. I absolutely love that once your fabric is in place, there is no taking it off the frame to readjust, but getting the fabric on the frame in the first place can be troublesome especially for a first-time user. Also, unlike hoops and q-snaps that can be used on any sized fabric, scroll frames have limitations. If you have a smaller scroll frame and decide to do a piece that requires a piece of fabric that is wider than your dowels, there is no workaround. The same goes for smaller pieces of fabric. The smallest scroll frame I have seen uses six-inch spreader bars and your fabric needs to be at least four inches bigger than the bars to stay on the dowels. If the fabric does not fit, the frame cannot be used, therefore, purchase of a larger or smaller frame is required. This would be all well and good if another frame was in your budget, but as you move into larger scroll frames, a new set of challenges arise.

Scroll frames work not only by wrapping the fabric around the dowels to keep them in place, but also by having the spreader bars pinch the dowels together so that the split wood is squeezed against the fabric trapped inside it. As the split dowels get longer, the space at the center of the



dowel is going to become looser as the spreader bars are so far apart and there is nothing at the center to pinch the dowel together. This makes securing fabric in large frames extremely difficult and can mean that the fabric comes loose while working. This would not be a problem on the scroll frames that utilize the paper fastening system, but on split scroll frames, it is a serious problem. Again, this is only an issue on the larger scroll frames, but as I use a moderate sized one, it is not an issue.

So, as you can see, even though I adore scroll frames, nothing is perfect. While I will always recommend scroll frames, there are certainly some circumstances that make using a scroll frame inconvenient and I can acknowledge that for some stitchers they are entirely impractical.

**Advantages:** very easy to adjust fabric, keeps fabric wrinkle-free, bigger working surface, multiple stand options, not as much strain on stitches, keeps fabric clean as it does not need to be handled once in frame

**Disadvantages:** heavy, unable hold in hand, can be difficult to get fabric on, won't work for all sized fabrics, too large to travel with, cheaper models may need sanding before use

**Q-Snaps:** In full disclosure, I have never used a q-snap frame. I have looked at them many times while wandering the needlework aisle of Hobby Lobby, but due to my happiness with scroll frames, I have never felt the need to try one. I think I may have to change that and give it a go simply out of curiosity. However, I do have some thoughts on them based on my experience with other frames that can be shared.

What is a q-snap? A q-snap is basically a hoop frame in square form that uses pvc type plastic tubes with claw like clamps that snap onto the main frame. My initial reluctance to q-snaps comes with the recognition that they carry many of the same disadvantages as hoops. Like hoops, these frames require your fabric to be smashed under the connecting parts of the frame. As discussed with hoops, this can cause distortion to your completed stitches. However, it is common to put thin fabric or felt between your stitching fabric and the frame to help minimize this. Depending on the size of your frame and project, you will also need to move the q-snap as you work on different sections of fabric. This means, like hoops, your fabric is going to gain a lot of wrinkles throughout the stitching process, though you will not have to worry about those pesky rings that are so hard to remove from hoops. Also, being that they are even bulkier than hoops, I can see them being difficult to hold, though they are not nearly as heavy and bulky as scroll frames.

Despite all that, I can definitely see some advantages to these frames when compared to the others.

First of all, these frames are known for being the best at keeping your fabric very taut during stitching meaning that you don't need to worry about your fabric once it is snapped into place. You will have a nice, sturdy working area which will make for very plump stitches. Also, due to the fact that the working space is square instead of round like a hoop, the working space is going to be slightly larger than a hoop's working space when comparing q-snaps and hoops of the same relative size, meaning you may not have to move it quite so often. Q-snap users are also known for having fun "grime guards" which are fabric covers that slip over the frame and which the excess fabric can be tucked into while stitching. This solves the problem I have with hoops with the excess fabric being a nuisance and it will keep your fabric fresh and clean such as with scroll frames.

Q-snaps come in a variety of sizes, though the smallest I have seen is 6 X 6 inch. And while they may not be as travel friendly as hoops, they certainly are more travel friendly than scroll frames.

In all, these frames seem to be a happy middle ground between hoops and scroll frames. If you are unable to utilize a stand for a scroll frame, q-snaps seem like the next best thing, in my opinion. While I'm sure it would be difficult on my hand to hold, it has numerous advantages over hoops, despite its bulkier size.

If any readers have anything else they would like to add about q-snaps, I would love to hear about them!

**Advantages:** keeps fabric very taut, comes in multiple sizes for all needs, larger working surface than hoops, travel friendly

**Disadvantages:** can flatten previously worked stitches, must be moved on fabric as stitching progresses, can cause wrinkling

At the end of the day, finding your perfect stitching frame is all about trial and error. What may work for one person may not be a good fit for another. You won't truly know until you try them out.

In the U.S., hoops frames can be found at all major craft retailers. Q-snaps and scroll frames can both be found at Michaels and Hobby Lobby. But, of course, I always encourage you to support your local LNS when possible.

# NEW RELEASE

Available at [sappirehandcrafts.etsy.com](https://sappirehandcrafts.etsy.com)

## Autumn Lace Pattern

Created using a single color, this design is meant to give the illusion of delicate lace.

Stitched in concentric square bands, this project allows for very peaceful stitching with an end result that is simply lovely.

## Autumn Harvest Fabric

This new fabric is available in both 14 count Aida and 28 count evenweave. For this fabric I decided to upgrade the base to a Zweigart fabric making this my shop's first "premium" fabric. This upgraded base means a luxuriously soft material that is a pleasure to hold. As is common with hand-dyed fabric, the Aida is slightly darker than the evenweave.

Unfortunately, I will only be shipping to the U.S. and Canada at this time.



Alternatively, this design can also be stitched on white fabric using orange floss to mirror the original colorway.

# MEMBER OF THE MONTH

## JOYCE

New Hampshire, USA

### How long have you been stitching?

*I learned to stitch as a child from my mother, who taught children's church activities. Little girls were taught homemaking skills, and when we were about nine or ten, we were taught to cross stitch, though it was not counted at the time, but embroidery. We each had a card and would practice the way the stitches went by following the numbers on the card. Then we stitched a little motto with a house, which hung for years on my wall in my bedroom, using dowels and a ribbon to hang it. I didn't love doing it at the time because I would rather be playing or reading. Then after I was married, there was a homemaking activity again at church, with little cross-stitch ornaments, and I kept coming back to it ("just one more row") and I was so excited to be able to make the x's even just by counting, and not have to make the x's crooked to cover up the lines printed on fabric. Little by little I grew to love stitching, and counted cross stitch was one of the things that helped me adjust when my husband and I moved with the two little children we had at the time across the country, far away from our families.*

### What is your most prized FFO?

*The one that came to mind is one I made for my parents years ago. There was a company that would take a photo you would send them and turn it into a cross-stitch chart, using about eight colors of browns to make a sepia-toned picture. I chose a photo of myself when I was about two years old. I love the results, but I do NOT like to stitch with browns! Also it was hard to see if you had made a mistake, because in progress, the stitched piece would look like a blob! But it turned out beautifully.*

### Favorite floss color?

*Not browns! I love DMC 927 and those surrounding it, sort of blue-green. I love colors next to each other, blues and pinks, and also greens and purples.*

### Favorite fabric for cross stitch?

*Once I discovered linen and evenweave, I loved the look of it, and loved to stitch on it. When social media began, I chose LinenLady9 as my user name. So yes, linen! However, after reading the article on fabrics in the October newsletter, I decided to try Aida again, and stitched the Trick-or-Treat chart from that newsletter, and really enjoyed it.*



## MEMBER OF THE MONTH – JOYCE (CONTINUED)

**What's your favorite novel (classic or current)?**

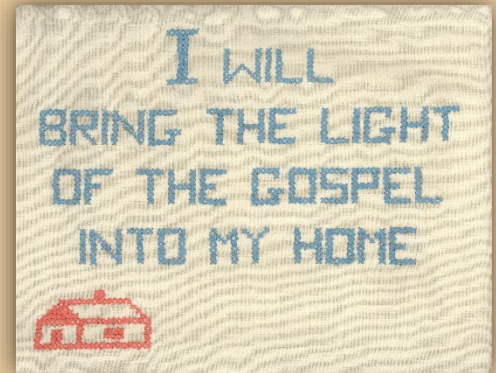
*When I was a child my older cousin suggested I read *Anne of Green Gables* and told me I would like it. A little voice inside of me said, "Don't tell me what I will like!", and it took me several years to give it a try, then I was glad I did! We live in New England, and since we moved here we have taken two trips to Prince Edward Island with our children, and listened to the audio book on the drive. I also love *Pride and Prejudice*, and *A Christmas Carol*. I knew the stories of both of them from the movies, and when I finally actually read the books, they have both made me cry, they are so beautiful.*

**What are your must-haves when sitting down to stitch?**

*Good light, good needles (I love John James, Bohin, and Peacemaker), and a good pair of scissors, which I apparently collect because I have a lot of pairs.*

**What is your favorite kind of design to stitch?**

*I love samplers, pieces that reflect history. And I also love folk art and fun seasonal pieces.*

**Where is your favorite place to stitch? If you could sit and stitch anywhere in the world, where would it be?**

*I love to stitch outside, in my backyard, with natural light and the sound of birds. That doesn't work in the winter, though! I have a comfy chair in my "Room of Requirement" where I stitch, knit and read, also. I love to take my stitching wherever I go. I would love to take it to Europe! In the meantime, even if I'm going to the grocery store, my stitching bag goes with me. You never know when the car will break down and you will need to wait for AAA! Or even just pause in your errands and sit quietly in the car for 15 minutes. Stitching calms my mind and slows my breathing and brings joy to my days.*

**Shoutout to your favorite designer or fabric/floss dyer!**

*Kristin (Stitching Book Club) has a wonderful sense of color in her designs. I discovered her when someone on Instagram posted about the *Pride and Prejudice* SAL, and I immediately texted my oldest daughter (my favorite stitching buddy) about it. My husband and I were on a trip to celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the time, and as part of the trip, I found a little shop in town and purchased fabric for my daughter and myself for the SAL. I have participated in almost all the rest of the SAL's also. In addition, I also love *Shepherd's Bush* (beautiful samplers, and lovely whimsical people and motifs), *Drawn Thread* (samplers!), *Brenda Gervais*, and many others.*

You can follow Joyce as [LinenLady9](#) on Instagram.

# *A Time to Give Thanks*



## *Materials:*

**Fabric:** 8 inch X 8 inch for 14 count or 28 count 2 over 2. Model is stitched on 14 count Sand Aida by Charles Craft. The design area for this design is 58 X 58 stitches.




### *Legend (2 strands of floss):*




◆	■	DMC Cotton 3685	mauve - dk
●	■	DMC Cotton 3777	terra cotta - vy dk
≡	■	DMC Cotton 22	alizarin
✕	■	DMC Cotton 580	moss green - dk
⋈	■	DMC Cotton 166	moss green - md lt
♠	■	DMC Cotton 729	old gold - md
*	■	DMC Cotton 972	canary - dp
✂	■	DMC Cotton 3853	autumn gold - dk
▲	■	DMC Cotton 720	orange spice - dk




# A Time to Give Thanks




## Legend:

-  DMC-3685 mauve - dk
-  DMC-3777 terra cotta - vy dk
-  DMC-22 alizarin

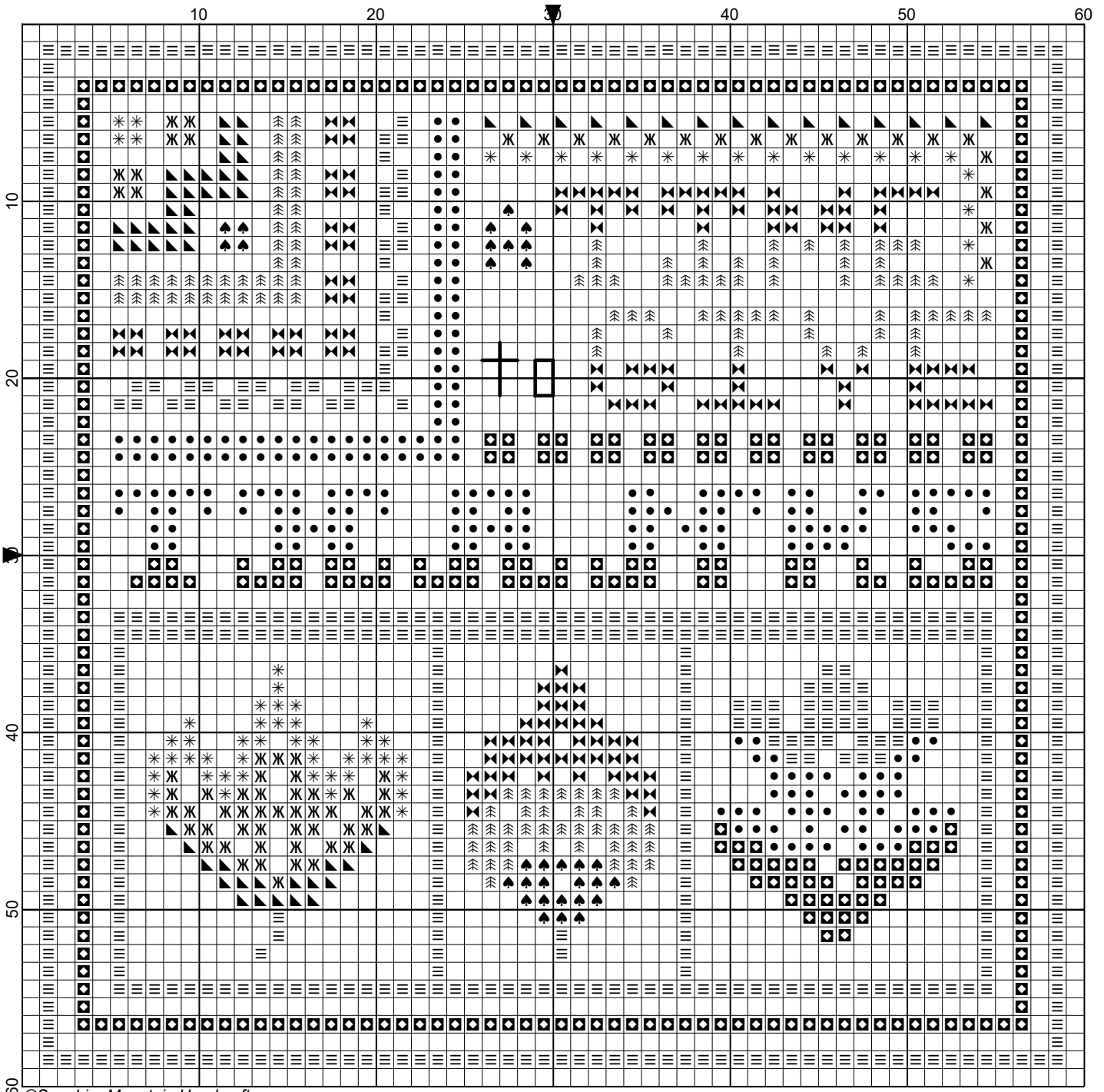
-  DMC-580 moss green - dk
-  DMC-166 moss green - md lt
-  DMC-729 old gold - md

-  DMC-972 canary - dp
-  DMC-3853 autumn gold - dk
-  DMC-720 orange spice - dk

## Backstitches:

-  DMC-729 old gold - md

# A Time to Give Thanks



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**Legend:**

- |  |                              |  |                            |  |                           |
|--|------------------------------|--|----------------------------|--|---------------------------|
|  | DMC-3685 mauve - dk          |  | DMC-580 moss green - dk    |  | DMC-972 canary - dp       |
|  | DMC-3777 terra cotta - vy dk |  | DMC-166 moss green - md lt |  | DMC-3853 autumn gold - dk |
|  | DMC-22 alizarin              |  | DMC-729 old gold - md      |  | DMC-720 orange spice - dk |

**Backstitches:**

— DMC-729 old gold - md